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Letter dated 20 September 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am writing to draw your attention to the recent announcement of the European Union (EU) and the United States of America that they are ready to lift sanctions on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia if its voters elect the opposition candidate at the forthcoming presidential elections on 24 September 2000. In addition, the United States and some EU member States continue to finance the activities of a number of political organizations and media in my country and have substantially increased the funding during the election campaign. Enclosed herewith are reports carried by *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* on 19 and 20 September, respectively, on the matter (see annexes I and II).

The announcement and the infusion of money into a country to swing the will of its electorate constitute a flagrant violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, relevant documents of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and international law and is most strongly condemned by the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The countries that, in wanton disregard for the Charter of the United Nations and circumventing the Security Council, carried out an armed aggression against my country last year, have now taken another step down the shameful road of disrespect for the basic norms of international law. In doing so, they have publicly and unscrupulously disparaged and encroached upon the inalienable right of Yugoslav voters to elect their own legitimate representatives. They have also violated General Assembly resolution 54/168 of 17 December 1999 relative to respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States in their electoral processes. The resolution was adopted exactly to prevent such inadmissible acts and practices.

Considering that a flagrant violation of the principle of non-interference in internal affairs of a sovereign State is at stake, I have been instructed by my Government to request the Security Council to consider this important and urgent issue at its next meeting.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Vladislav **Jovanovic**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex I to the letter dated 20 September 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

$77 Million Helps Foes Of Milosevic

Election Aid Tests U.S. Balkans Policy

By John Lancaster
Washington Post Staff Writer

Charges of Chinese influence-buying in the 1996 U.S. presidential campaign caused a political storm in Washington that has yet to fully abate. By some measures, however, that episode pales by comparison to American political interference in Serbia, locus of a $77 million U.S. effort to do with ballots what NATO bombs could not—get rid of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic.

In the run-up to national elections on Sept. 24, U.S. aid officials and contractors are working to strengthen Serbia's famously fractured democratic opposition. They have helped train its organizers, equipped their offices with computers and fax machines and provided opposition parties with sophisticated voter surveys compiled by the same New York firm that conducts polls for President Clinton.

More generally, they have sought to foster what one aid consultant calls "democracy with a small 'd'," funneling support to student groups, labor unions, independent media outlets, even Serbian heavy metal bands that stage street concerts as part of a voter registration drive called "Rock the Vote."

With Milosevic running well behind in the polls—the latest surveys give his main opponent, Belgrade lawyer Vojislav Kostunica, a 16-point lead—administration officials are mulling a variety of possible outcomes, from capitulation by Milosevic (considered a long shot) to massive electoral fraud (probably the safest bet). Either way, the election is shaping up as the most important test for U.S. policy in the Balkans since the 1998-1999 Kosovo crisis, which led to Milosevic's indictment as a war criminal and triggered the American-led campaign to drive him from power.

"For the first time over the last year, we've seen the emergence of a real democratic opposition," said a senior State Department official. "These elections are a way station on that process."

There is nothing secret or even particularly unusual about the U.S. democracy-building program in Serbia, which is closely coordinated with European allies and is similar to previous campaigns in pre-democratic Chile, South Africa and Eastern Europe, among other places. U.S. officials say they are careful in such situations to focus their energy on building broad-based democratic institutions rather than backing individual parties or candidates, as the Chinese were accused of doing here in 1996.

"There's a specific sensitivity because people assume we pick candidates," the State Department official said. "Our efforts don't do that. We just make sure there's an architecture for a fair election."

But in Serbia, it's a very fine line, in part because the stakes are so high.

U.S. officials dealt with Milosevic as a negotiating partner, albeit reluctantly, during the mid-1990s. But the Kosovo crisis persuaded them that peace cannot prevail in the Balkans as long as he remains in power. They are particularly concerned about his designs on Montenegro, Serbia's smaller partner in the Yugoslav federation, whose pro-Western president, Milo Djukanovic, accused Milosevic in an interview earlier this month of trying to drum up a "pretext for military intervention" in his tiny republic.

Underscoring worries about Serbia and Montenegro, the Pentagon yesterday began a global shift of forces to bolster the U.S. military presence in the Balkans. A carrier battle group led by the USS Abraham Lincoln left Thai waters ahead of schedule and headed toward the Persian Gulf, which will free up another carrier group, led by the USS George Washington, for movement to the Adriatic Sea, Defense Department officials said.

Dismissing Serbia's charges of unwarranted interference in its internal affairs, U.S. officials say they are seeking only to level the playing field in a country whose authoritarian leader thinks nothing of shutting down critical media outlets or tossing opponents in jail.

> "They've put us on a path to elections . . . that will almost certainly lead to Milosevic's reelection in unfree and unfair conditions."
>
> — A former U.S. diplomat

Fostering democracy in such conditions is ticklish. Milosevic routinely cites American meddling to justify his crackdown on opposition movements and media. According to a senior U.S. official, Serbian police recently arrested and tortured an opposition member after intercepting an e-mail sent to him from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which, along with the Washington-based National Endowment for Democracy (NED), is one of the major conduits for American aid to the opposition.

Mindful of such risks, the endowment recently stopped posting details of its Serbian program on its Web site. In a similar vein, a NED official smiled apologetically as he acknowledged that while information on grant recipients in Serbia is a matter of public record, he could not release such data without a formal request under the Freedom of Information Act—a process that would extend long past Sept. 24.

Because Americans no longer are permitted to work in Serbia, and U.S. officials are afraid of compromising Serbs who receive their help, aid recipients typically travel to Hungary and other neighboring countries for training, strategy sessions and infusions of cash. Some of the American help also takes the form of humanitarian aid to opposition-led local governments.

There are signs that the American effort has generated something of a backlash. Kostunica, the front-runner, makes a point of telling audiences that he accepts no Western aid. Pro-Milosevic posters show a picture of another leading opposition

The Washington Post
DC 19.9.2000.

U.S. Aid Aimed at Defeating Milosevic

MILOSEVIC, *From A1*

figure—former deputy prime minister Vuk Drasko•ic—kissing the hand of Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright.

Partly for that reason, some analysts accuse the administration of placing too much emphasis on opposition parties and the election rather than on building broad-based movements, such as student organizations, with a long-term commitment to civil society and democratic rule.

"In the last year, the administration has focused clearly, at long last, on the notion that Milosevic is part of the problem, not part of the solution," said a former U.S. diplomat with long experience in the Balkans. "The question is whether they've done a good job of it. Have they put us on a path that's going to lead to success? Well, they've put us on a path to elections . . . that will almost certainly lead to Milosevic's reelection in unfree and unfair conditions. And where will we be then?"

State Department officials acknowledge, as one put it, that "a democratic Serbia is more than just an election." But they also suggest that if Milosevic resorts to massive fraud, it might not be such a bad thing.

"If he steals these elections, he'll be further de-legitimized in the eyes of the Serbian people and the international community and that makes his hold on power more tenuous," said James C. O'Brien, special adviser to the president and secretary of state for democracy in the Balkans.

The pro-democracy campaign did not begin in earnest until the end of last year's NATO air campaign to drive Serbian forces from Kosovo. It has since grown rapidly, from an authorized $10.7 million last year to $25 million this year; the administration has requested $41.5 million for the next fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, for a total of $77.2 million over three years.

The largest share of that money goes toward "civil society" programs, such as those that support independent media, with no direct connection to specific parties or elections. Nevertheless, the administration has associated itself closely with leading Serbian opposition figures such as Zoran Djindjic, president of the Democratic Party in Serbia, who was part of a delegation that received a warm reception in Washington last November.

In a similar vein, USAID this year will spend $3.8 billion on "political process" programs, including "technical assistance" to political parties, get-out-the-vote campaigns and efforts to help opposition parties "develop an economic reform . . . agenda for use in election campaigns," according to an agency fact sheet.

Much of the assistance is channeled through nongovernmental organizations such as the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, a Washington-based group that among other things has coordinated extensive public opinion surveys in Serbia by Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates, Inc., Clinton's polling firm.

Such surveys can benefit opposition candidates seeking to plot campaign strategy. But Kenneth D. Wollack, the group's president, says the organization is careful to make all the poll results public so that it cannot be accused of backing one candidate against another.

"We try not to inject ourselves into a campaign," he said, adding that the group has, for the same reason, suspended "material assistance" to political parties in the run-up to the election. "We're not in a campaign mode," Wollack said. "We look at our work on a much longer-term basis."

Staff writer Thomas E. Ricks contributed to this report.

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The Washington Post

Annex II to the letter dated 20 September 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Milosevic, Trailing in Polls, Rails Against NATO

By STEVEN ERLANGER

BELGRADE, Serbia, Sept. 19 — In his race for re-election, President Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia is running against NATO and the United States, not against his democratic opposition.

He is not entirely mistaken to do so. The United States and its European allies have made it clear that they want Mr. Milosevic ousted, and they have spent tens of millions of dollars trying to get it done.

Portraying himself as the defender of Yugoslavia's sovereignty against a hostile, hegemonic West led by Washington, Mr. Milosevic and his government argue that opposition leaders are merely the paid, traitorous tools of enemies who are continuing their war against him by other means. In March 1999, NATO began a 78-day bombing campaign to drive Serbian forces out of Kosovo.

The Yugoslav elections are on Sunday, but there has hardly been a day since the bombing began that state television news has not railed against "NATO aggressors."

With the campaign at its height, the government has spread its attacks to include all opposition political parties, independent newspapers, magazines and electronic media, the student organization known as Otpor — or Resistance — and any nongovernmental organization working to promote democracy, human rights or even economic reforms.

While Mr. Milosevic is trailing the main opposition leader, Vojislav Kostunica, in opinion polls, the anti-Western campaign is having an impact. The money from the West is going to most of the institutions that the government attacks for receiving it — sometimes in direct aid, sometimes in indirect aid like computers and broadcasting equipment, and sometimes in suitcases of cash carried across the border between Yugoslavia and Hungary or Serbia and Montenegro. Most of those organizations and news media could not exist without foreign aid in this society, which is poor and repressive and whose market is distorted by foreign economic sanctions.

Even with foreign aid, government restrictions on newsprint supplies and high and repeated fines after suspiciously quick court cases make it hard for the independent news media to reach their natural market.

As for the opinion polls that show Mr. Kostunica in the lead, the information minister, Goran Matic, charges that the polls are orchestrated and manipulated by the Americans and the Central Intelligence Agency, who help pay for them. According to Mr. Matic, Mr. Milosevic is actually far ahead of Mr. Kostunica, and the polls simply serve as a vehicle for the opposition to claim that the government stole the election once Mr. Milosevic wins.

Mr. Matic asserts that the Atlantic alliance has come up with various scenarios, such as infiltrating soldiers wearing Yugoslav Army and police uniforms, to make it possible for the opposition to start civil unrest in the streets after the election while claiming that the police and the army are actually on their side.

Mr. Matic has attacked various nongovernmental organizations, including the Center for Free Elections and Democracy, which is trying to monitor the fairness of the election,

> Yugoslav groups taking Western aid are labeled traitors.

as paid instruments of American and alliance policy. Many such organizations have been raided by the police, who confiscate computer files and also appear to be gathering evidence about foreign payments.

"President Milosevic will win this election," said Ljubisa Ristic, the president of the Yugolav United Left party, founded by Mr. Milosevic's wife, Mirjana Markovic. "This is not Hollywood." Washington and the West, she said, "are like little kids, wanting something to happen so much they're fooling themselves."

Mr. Ristic said the alliance's war produced a new solidarity among Yugoslavs and "killed many illusions people had about the West and about their own opposition leaders, who went to the countries that were bombing us to seek their support."

The issues, Mr. Ristic said, are clear now. "It's a decisive time," he said. "This is not an election so much as a referendum, a decision on being an independent country or a colony. People see what's happened in Kosovo, what happens when NATO troops enter the country, and they are not going to allow the alliance's handpicked candidates to win."

Even before the Kosovo war, the United States was spending up to $10 million a year to back opposition parties, independent news media and other institutions opposed to Mr. Milosevic. The war itself cost billions of dollars. This fiscal year, through September, the administration is spending $25 million to support Serbian "democratization," with an unknown amount of money spent covertly to help the failed rallies of last year, which did not bring down Mr. Milosevic, or to influence the current election. For next year, the administration is requesting $41.5 million in open aid to Serbian democratization, though Congress is likely to cut that request.

Independent journalists and broadcasters here have been told by American aid officials "not to worry about how much they're spending now," that plenty more is in the pipeline, said one knowledgable aid worker. Others in the opposition complain that the Americans are clumsy, sending e-mails from "state.gov" — the State Department's address — summoning people to impolitic meetings with American officials in Budapest, Montenegro or Dubrovnik, Croatia.

But there is little effort to disguise the fact that Western money pays for much of the polling, advertising, printing and other costs of the opposition political campaign — one way, to be sure, to give opposition leaders a better chance to get their message across in a quasi-authoritarian system where television in particular is in the firm hands of the government.

While that spending allows the opposition to be heard more broadly, deepening the opposition to Mr. Milosevic, it also allows the government here to argue that it has real enemies, and that the Serbian opposition is in league with them.

Just today, in the state-run newspaper Politika, a long article used public information from the United States — including Congressional testimony and Web site material — to show that the United States is financing the opposition.

"'Independent,' 'nongovernmental' and 'democratic' are the standard phrases the C.I.A. uses to describe organizations established all over the world to destroy the governments and the societies that the U.S. government wants to colonize and control," the paper wrote.

The Congressional testimony, from July 29, 1999, cited American officials then involved with Yugoslav policy, like Robert Gelbard and James Pardew, telling Senator Joseph Biden of Delaware about their projects. They describe the creation of a "ring around Serbia" of radio stations broadcasting into Serbia from Bosnia and Montenegro, the spending of $16.5 million in the previous two years to support "democratization in Serbia," and another $20 million to support Montenegro's president, Milo Djukanovic, who broke away from Mr. Milosevic in 1998.

The testimony listed some of the recipients of American aid here, including various newspapers, magazines, news agencies and broadcasters opposed to Mr. Milosevic, as well as various nongovernmental organizations engaged in legal defense and human rights and projects to bring promising Yugoslav journalists to the United States for professional training.

All such projects are portrayed by Politika and state television as a way to undermine the legal government, and the recipients are labeled traitors to their country.

Opposition leaders like Mr. Kostunica regard such tactics by the government as crass propaganda, but even he is skeptical of American intentions in paying for nongovernmental organizations, some of whom, he believes, are even unconsciously working for American imperial goals and not necessarily Serbian values.

Other democratic leaders, like Zoran Djindjic and Zarko Korac, regard such attacks as an indication of Mr. Milosevic's desperation and anxiety on the eve of the first election he is likely to lose in his entire political career. Given the stakes for Mr. Milosevic, they believe that he will do all he can, including the wholesale stealing of votes, to ensure a victory in the first round of voting.

"The stakes are fundamental for Milosevic," Mr. Korac said. "These elections are crucial, not necessarily for the immediate handover of power, but because for the first time Mr. Milosevic will be delegitimized in the eyes of his own people. He was an elected dictator, with popular and legal legitimacy. But from now on he's a true dictator, and he will only be able to rule by force — that's a big step for Serbia."